

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 02546 091253Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 DLOS-09 OES-09 /070 W
-----012570 100231Z /70

R 090849Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3048
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS HELSINKI 2546

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, FI, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET PATROL BOAT ACTIVITY AND APPARENT SOVIET DEFECTION

1. THE HELSINGIN SANOMAT REPORTED SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, AN INCIDENT IN WHICH A SOVIET PATROL BOAT ALLEGEDLY SEARCHED A FINNISH TRAWLER WITH SPOTLIGHTS FROM A DISTANCE OF 20 METERS AND DISAPPEARED TOWARD ESTONIA AFTER THE TRAWLER HAD MADE RADIO CONTACT WITH THE FINNISH COAST GUARD. THE INCIDENT REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS JUST BEYOND FINNISH TERRITORIAL WATERS. THE NEWSPAPER HINTED THAT THE INCIDENT COULD BE RELATED TO A SOVIET SEARCH FOR A DEFECTOR OR DEFECTORS.

2. ON AUGUST 8 THE SWEDISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER HUFVUDSTADSBLADET REPORTED THAT FINNISH FRONTIER AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY THE SOVIETS OF A DEFECTOR FROM THE USSR WHO MAY HAVE CROSSED OVER THE GULF OF FINLAND AND WHO IS BELIEVED TO BE HEADED FOR SWEDEN. ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPER, FINNISH AUTHORITIES DECLINED TO DISCUSS THE CASE OR TO ADMIT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SO INFORMED
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BY THE SOVIETS. ON THE SAME DAY, HELSINGIN SANOMAT REPORTED THAT THERE HAS BEEN LIVELY ACTIVITY BY SOVIET PATROL BOATS IN AN AREA OF INTERNATIONAL WATERS SOUTH OF HELSINKI SINCE THE END OF LAST WEEK AGAIN HINTING AT A LINK BETWEEN THIS ACTIVITY AND A POSSIBLE SOVIET DEFECTION.

3. ON AUGUST 9 HELSINGIN SANOMAT REPORTED THAT FINNISH BORDER AUTHORITIES HAVE CONFIRMED FINLAND HAS RECEIVED A SOVIET REQUEST TO SEARCH FOR A SOVIET CITIZEN, MART EDUARDOVITS WAHTER, BORN 1959. ACCORDING TO THE FINNISH AUTHORITIES, WAHTER PUT OUT TO SEA (APPARENTLY IN A SMALL BOAT) AUGUST 1 AND HAS GONE PERHAPS INTO FINNISH TERRITORY WHERE HE POSSIBLY MAY HAVE BEEN PICKED UP BY A FINNISH SHIP OR MAY HAVE LANDED ON THE FINNISH COAST. HELSINGIN SANOMAT QUOTES A FINNISH BORDER GUARD OFFICIAL AS SAYING THAT UP TO NOW THERE HAS BEEN NO TRACE OF THE MAN OR HIS BOAT. THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT IF THE MAN IS FOUND, HIS RETURN (TURNING OVER TO SOVIET AUTHORITIES) WILL BE DECIDED BY THE FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTRY.

FRY

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 09 aug 1978
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Reason:
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